

Employment and Skills Survey Responses

111 respondents contributed to the survey, 86% from Self-Employed, Micro, Small and Medium businesses.

- 63.06% from Powys
- 28.83% from Ceredigion
- 6.31% from Wales (excl. Mid Wales)
- 1.80% from outside of Wales

Breakdowns by region of questions can be found here:

[Region and challenge to business comparison table .csv](#)

[Regions and recruitment table .csv](#)

[Regions and recruitment table .csv](#)

The largest contribution was from Advanced Materials and Manufacturing (17.35%), the lowest from Forestry (1%) and Creative Industries (1%).

Which sector does your main business activity align with?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Advanced Materials and Manufacturing	17.35%	17
Construction	13.27%	13
Leisure and Tourism	11.22%	11
Food and Drink	8.16%	8
Retail	8.16%	8
Energy and Environment	5.10%	5
Education	5.10%	5
Health and Social Care	5.10%	5
Public Sector	5.10%	5
ICT	4.08%	4
Life Science	4.08%	4
Farming	3.06%	3
Financial and Professional Services	3.06%	3
Third Sector	3.06%	3
Transport and Distribution	2.04%	2
Creative Industries	1.02%	1
Forestry	1.02%	1
Other (please specify)		17
	Answered	98
	Skipped	13

Note: In the next survey it may be better to categorise sectors more in line with our priority sectors, (Food and drink and Agriculture are separated in this survey). Lightcast SOC codes could be used for this, which could also make comparison to the LMI easier. 17 respondents were unable

to categorise their business to the listed sectors and 13 skipped the question, meaning that 27% of respondents did not input into the above results.

Breakdown of questions by sector can be found here:

[Sector Comparison Tables](#)

Challenges Facing Businesses

What roles are you facing skills challenges in?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Skilled Trade Occupations	27.88%	29
Other (please specify)	23.08%	24
Professional Occupations	14.42%	15
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	8.65%	9
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	6.73%	7
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	6.73%	7
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	4.81%	5
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	3.85%	4
Manager, Directors and Senior Officials	2.88%	3
Elementary Occupations	0.96%	1
	Answered	104
	Skipped	7

Sector breakdown can be found here: [Roles and Sector Comparison Table .csv](#)

Regional breakdown can be found here: [Regions and Roles Comparison Table.csv](#)

Note: As above I think the categories for this question could be changed for the next survey. The 'Other' category is a high percentage as respondents wanted to check multiple boxes or did not understand how the roles they wished to input could fit in the above categories.

What is the main challenge facing you as a business?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Recruitment	63.11%	65
Retention	11.65%	12
Transportation Links	8.74%	9
Succession Planning	6.80%	7
Staff Training and Development	4.85%	5
Poor Digital Connectivity	4.85%	5
	Answered	103
	Skipped	8

Note: Each of the above answer choices could have their own associated question. It could be that transportation links impact on recruitment. The disparity in responses between recruitment and

the rest of the answer choices may indicate that these could be separated, or changed to a ranking type of question.

What is your most common recruitment issue?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Not enough people interested in doing this type of work	30.19%	32
Applicants don't have the necessary skills or experience	20.75%	22
Geographic location	16.98%	18
Other (please specify)	16.98%	18
Applicants don't have the necessary qualifications	4.72%	5
Salaries offered are low in comparison to similar organisations in other regions	4.72%	5
Too much competition from other employers	2.83%	3
Lack of career progression	0.94%	1
Long or unsocial hours	0.94%	1
Staff don't want a long-term commitment	0.94%	1
	Answered	106
	Skipped	5

Apprenticeships

Do you currently employ apprentices?

Answer Choices	Responses	
No	56.36%	62
Yes	43.64%	48
	Answered	110
	Skipped	1

Note: The relatively high number of apprentices could be reflective of the comparatively higher responses from the advanced manufacturing and materials and construction industries.

Of those who responded they did not employ apprentices, 53 answered 'If no, why?'. These comments were tagged into the following categories:

If no, why?

Tags	Response Rate
Not suited to business need	35.85%
Resourcing (general)	22.64%
Access to training	18.87%
In the future	15.09%
Lack of interest	13.21%
Lack of knowledge/Know-how	5.66%
Not answered	5.66%
Have employed apprentices in the past, but not currently	3.77%
In-house training rather than apprentice route	1.89%
No help	1.89%

A single response could be tagged into multiple categories. All responses can be accessed here: [Apprentice Comments 2023 Survey.pdf](#). These comments are anonymised. For a sector breakdown please go to: [Sector and Apprentice Comparison Table .csv](#)

The below table outlines the sentiments of responses for those who answered that they do currently employ apprentices. In total, 45 answered this question.

If yes, do you believe apprentices add value to your business? Why?

Tags	Responses
Bring a benefit (positive sentiment, any benefit)	97.78%
Future of the company/progression/succession	48.89%
High standard of training/business specific training	31.11%
Solution to skills gap	22.22%
Solution to retention	11.11%
Enthusiasm	11.11%
New perspectives	15.56%
Willingness to learn	4.44%
Supports local community	4.44%
Cost effective	2.22%
Do not bring a benefit (negative sentiment)	2.22%

A single response can be tagged into multiple categories. All responses (anonymised) can be accessed here: [Apprentice Benefits Comments.pdf](#).

Welsh Language Questions

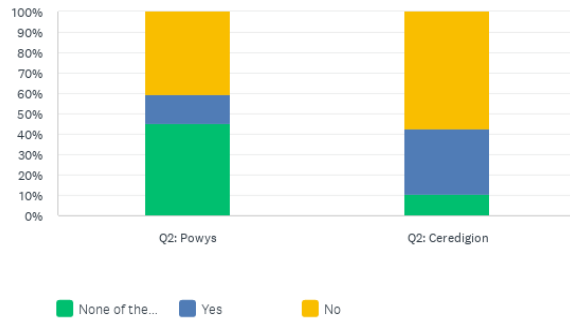
Do you struggle to recruit people with the right level of Welsh language?

Answer Choices	Responses
No	41.84% 41
None of the above	35.71% 35
Yes	22.45% 22
Answered	98
Skipped	13

Most respondents either do not struggle to recruit people with the right level of Welsh language, or it is not a requirement in recruitment (77.55%). 22.45% of companies do struggle to recruit people with the right level of Welsh language. This could reflect the fact that most respondents were based in Powys rather than Ceredigion, which has a higher proportion of Welsh speakers.

When filtered by area, the results are as follows:

Q11 Do you struggle to recruit people with the right level of Welsh language?



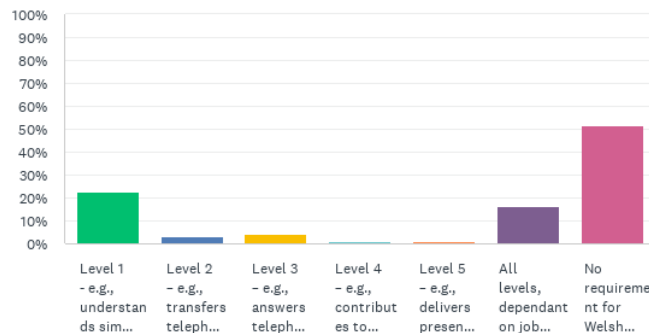
Do you struggle to recruit people with the right level of Welsh language?

	None of the above		Yes		No		Total	
Q2: Powys	45.16%	28	14.52%	9	40.32%	25	68.89%	62
Q2: Ceredigion	10.71%	3	32.14%	9	57.14%	16	31.11%	28
Total	34.44%	31	20.00%	18	45.56%	41	100.00%	90
							Answered	90
							Skipped	12

The follow-on question asked what level of Welsh language was needed at work and aimed to gain an understanding of the level expected by employers. The narrative from this question largely follows as suggested above; from a regional perspective employers are split 50/50 on any requirement for Welsh language and no requirement for Welsh language. A sector breakdown of recruitment of Welsh speakers can be found here: [Sector Welsh language recruitment comparison table .csv](#)

When the counties are compared the requirement for Welsh is more prominent in Ceredigion than Powys. Powys employers have no requirement, or a basic requirement for Welsh language (bilingual greetings, understanding of simple requests in Welsh) in most responses. Levels 3, 4 and 5 were not selected by any Powys businesses surveyed. The requirement for Welsh language from Ceredigion businesses is more distributed across levels of Welsh language with a higher proportion of businesses requiring all levels, dependent on job role. A breakdown of responses by sector can be found here: [Sector and Welsh language level comparison table .csv](#)

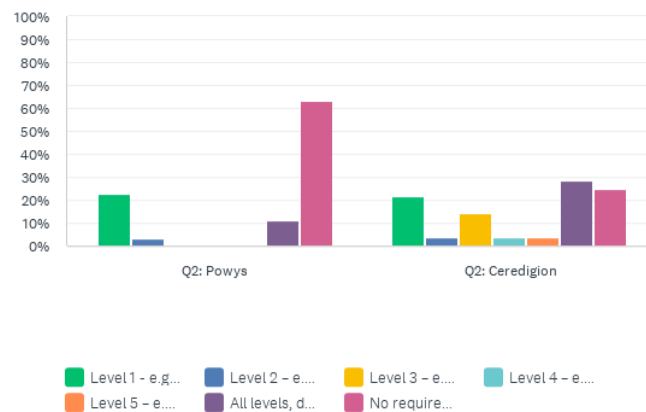
Q12 At what level does your workforce need and use the Welsh language at work?



At what level does your workforce need and use the Welsh language at work?

Answer Choices	Responses
Level 1 - e.g., understands simple requests by telephone, gives bilingual greeting on telephone	22.68%
Level 2 – e.g., transfers telephone calls in Welsh and responds in Welsh to simple requests, communicates face to face at basic level, using past, present and future tenses.	3.09%
Level 3 – e.g., answers telephone enquiries and takes simple messages in Welsh. Can hold a Welsh conversation but may revert to English for negotiating/ relaying technical information	4.12%
Level 4 – e.g., contributes to Welsh at meetings, deals with phone enquiries confidently in Welsh, understands dialects, writes formal letters and e-mails in Welsh	1.03%
Level 5 – e.g., delivers presentations in Welsh, Writes reports, Publications and agreements in Welsh	1.03%
All levels, dependant on job role	16.49%
No requirement for Welsh language	51.55%
	Answered 97
	Skipped 14

Q12 At what level does your workforce need and use the Welsh language at work?



At what level does your workforce need and use the Welsh language at work?

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	All levels, dependant on job role	No requirement for Welsh language	Total	
Powys	22.58%	3.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	11.29%	62.90%	68.89%	62
Ceredigion	21.43%	3.57%	14.29%	3.57%	3.57%	28.57%	25.00%	31.11%	28
Total	22.22%	3.33%	4.44%	1.11%	1.11%	16.67%	51.11%	100.00%	90
									Answered 90
									Skipped 12

Ex-Offender Recruitment

Would you consider recruiting an ex-offender into your business?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	64.52% 60
No	35.48% 33
	Answered 93
	Skipped 18

The survey asked respondents if they would consider hiring an ex-offender into your business, not if they have ever, or currently have hired an ex-offender into their business. This question therefore is to see what their sentiments are towards ex-offenders as potential recruits into the workforce. The sector breakdown for this question can be found here: [Sector and Ex-offender Comparison table .csv](#)

As shown above, the sentiments towards ex-offender recruitment are largely positive with a majority answering yes, they would consider hiring an ex-offender. This could favour future exploration into more prison events as we engage further with businesses, Berwyn, and Parc prisons.

To understand this further, we asked those who responded 'No' to the above question why they wouldn't consider hiring an ex-offender. The below is a breakdown of the reasons, tagged into categories. The full responses (anonymised) can be found here: [Ex Offender Responses.pdf](#)

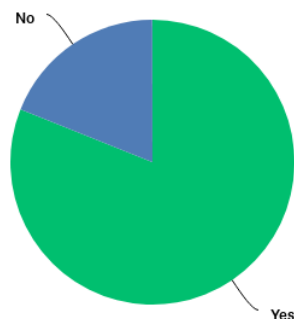
If no, why?

Tags	Responses
Unsuitable to business	47.06%
Potentially would consider	26.47%
Dependent on job role	14.71%
Dependent on type of offence	11.76%
Dependent on ability to work independently	11.76%
Not recruiting at all	8.82%
Need more information	5.88%
No response given	5.88%
Have employed ex-offender(s) in the past	2.94%
May cause a problem with existing staff	2.94%
Answered	34
Skipped	77

26.47% of respondents indicated that despite answering 'No' to hiring an ex-offender, they would potentially hire an ex-offender based on other consideration such as type of offence, ability to work independently without supervision and the job role.

Net-Zero Investment

Q15 Do you currently invest in reducing your carbon footprint?



Do you currently invest in reducing your carbon footprint?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	81.05% 77
No	18.95% 18
Answered 95	
Skipped 16	

81.05% of businesses surveyed responded that they are currently investing in reducing their carbon footprint, a significant proportion of respondents. A breakdown of responses by sector can be found here: [Sector and Investment in Carbon reduction comparison table .csv](#)

When asked for more information on what they are currently investing in, the responses range from recycling and reducing waste and consumption to installation of solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations. The responses to this question are categorised below. The full responses to this question can be found here: [Investment into reducing carbon footprint.pdf](#)

If Yes, what do you currently invest in?

Tags	Responses
Reduce waste/recycle	34.72%
Change to energy	29.17%
Change to transport	29.17%
Electric Vehicles/Charging	23.61%
Solar	19.44%
Energy efficiency	18.06%
Staff education/training	16.67%
Changes to products/processes	13.89%
Hybrid working	9.72%
Awards/Networks/Schemes	4.17%
Emphasis on local	4.17%
N/A	4.17%
Carbon capture	1.39%

Carbon neutrality	1.39%
Car share	1.39%
Tree planting/Biodiversity	1.39%
Answered	72
Skipped	39

The survey also asked those who answered 'No' why they do not invest in reducing their carbon footprint. The results are categorised below. The full responses are available here: [What stops you investing in reducing carbon footprint.pdf](#)

If no, what stops you from investing in reducing your carbon footprint?

Tags	Responses
Price	53.85%
Require some support	38.46%
Will be investing soon	23.08%
Incompatible	15.38%
Not enough local work	7.69%
Answered	13
Skipped	98

Investment and Growth Plans

What investment/ growth plans do you have for the next 12 months?

Tags	Responses
Yes, investment/growth plans	78.87%
Expanding programmes/projects	48.45%
Recruitment	23.94%
No plans/Growth unlikely	14.08%
Investment in new technology/machinery	15.49%
Redevelopment of site/facilities/New site	15.49%
'Scaling up'	11.27%
New service	9.86%
Growing Mid Wales market	7.04%
New contracts	7.04%
Skills Training	7.04%
Growing market outside of Mid Wales	5.63%
Business acquisition	4.23%
Expanding production	4.23%
New grant/funding	4.23%
New product	4.23%
R&D expansion	2.82%
Sustainability	2.82%
N/A	7.04%
Answered	71
Skipped	40

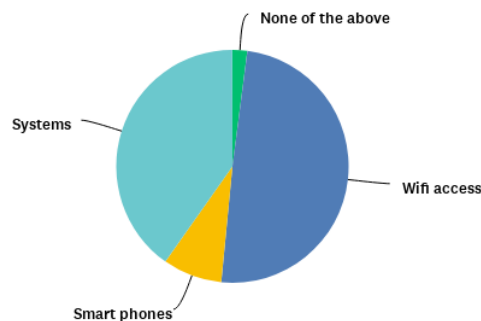
The survey asked respondents to outline their investments or plans for growth in the next year. As the table above displays, there was a variety of responses given to this open-ended question. Highlighted is the overall takeaway from this question; 78.7% of respondents do have plans for investment and/or growth in the next year, compared to 14.08% of respondents who said they were unlikely to grow and/or invest in the next year.

Expanding programmes and projects (48.45%), developing new products (4.23%) and providing new services (9.86%) were common responses across businesses, as well as plans to recruit (23.94%). More businesses responded with plans to grow their markets within Mid Wales (7.04%), than expand their market outside of Mid Wales (5.63%). Skills training was mentioned in 7.04% of responses. The full responses can be found here: [Investment Growth Responses.pdf](#)

Note: This was skipped by a significant number of respondents, or the response given was N/A (7.04%). It may be because the wrong person in the organisation was responding to the survey to answer this question. In the future, this type of question could be included in a more targeted survey of strategic directors or CEOs who would be able to provide more information. The cluster groups may be able to facilitate this.

Digital Technology

Q19 What type of digital technology is most important to your business?



What type of digital technology is most important to your business?

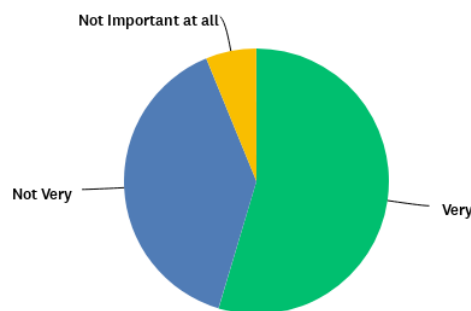
Answer Choices	Responses
Wi-Fi access	49.48% 48
Systems	40.21% 39
Smart phones	8.25% 8
None of the above	2.06% 2
Answered	97
Skipped	14

Note: This question was included at the request of Dave Owen.

Wi-Fi access was identified as the most important digital technology across all-sectors (49.48%), systems were also identified as important for 40.21% of respondents, with smart phones the most important digital technology for 8.25% of respondents. A breakdown according to sectors can be accessed here: [Sector and Digital Technology Comparison Table .csv](#)

Schools, Further Education and Training Providers

Q20 How important is working with schools/ FE / Training providers for your business?



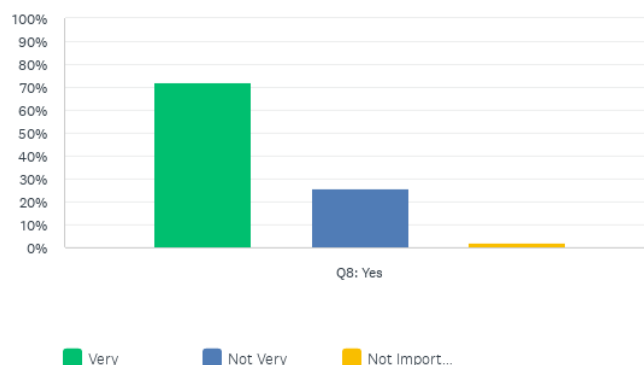
How important is working with schools/ FE / Training providers for your business?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very	54.64% 53
Not Very	39.18% 38
None	6.19% 6
Answered	97
Skipped	14

The majority of respondents place value upon working with schools, further education institutions and training providers. 44.37% of respondents do not value working with education and training organisations (Not Very, None). This is encouraging but there is a case for further work to link businesses with partner colleges in the region and convince them of the benefits. A sector breakdown of responses can be found here: [Sectors and working with schools, FE, TP comparison table .csv](#)

It is also notable that these results reflect the results from a previous question asking if businesses currently employ apprentices. **The below chart and table are a comparison of those who responded that they do employ apprentices, and the importance of working with schools, further education institutions and training providers.** As expected, these results generally correlate but there remains 27.91% of those that do employ apprentices, and do not value working with education and training organisations.

Q20 How important is working with schools/ FE / Training providers for your business?



	Very	Not Very	None
Q8: Yes	72.09% 31	25.58% 11	2.33% 1
Total	72.09% 31	25.58% 11	2.33% 1
	Answered 43		
	Skipped 5		

Cluster Groups

The survey asked respondents for suggestions on topics which could be addressed in our cluster groups. The below is a breakdown of responses. For the full response (anonymised) can be found here: [Cluster group comments.pdf](#)

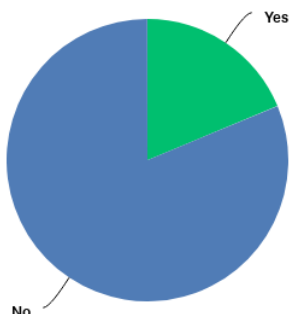
The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership pulls together businesses across Mid Wales in a cluster group to help identify key barriers and opportunities for skills. Your views as a business are crucial to help inform the work of education and training providers and Government. What are the key things you would like this group to focus on in the future?

Tags	Responses
Education/training	53.73%
Skills gap/Solutions to skills gaps	25.37%
Recruitment	16.42%
Business/schools partnerships	14.93%
Promotion of a specific sector	11.94%
Digital connectivity	10.45%
Apprenticeships	8.96%
Future skills	8.96%
Transport links	8.96%
IT skills	5.97%
Recruiting young people	5.97%
Retaining young people	5.97%
Staff retention	5.97%

Tendering/bidding/opportunities	5.97%
Cross-border education & training	4.48%
Grants/financial support	4.48%
Hospitality industry	4.48%
Engineering	2.99%
N/A	2.99%
Welsh language	2.99%
Work experience	2.99%
Help for businesses to promote themselves	1.49%
High street regeneration	1.49%
Micro businesses	1.49%
Net Zero	1.49%
ORP	1.49%
Parking	1.49%
STEM promotion in schools	1.49%
Answered	67
Skipped	44

Maths Skills

Q22 Do you experience low levels of maths skills amongst your staff?



Do you experience low levels of maths skills amongst your staff?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	18.75%	18
No	81.25%	78
Answered		96
Skipped		15

How are problems with low levels of maths skills amongst staff affecting your business? E.g. productivity, business growth, staff retention/progression

Tags	Responses
Basic maths skills shortage	2.56%
Maths skills are critical to type of work	2.56%

Low levels are an issue	7.69%
Logistics work	2.56%
Management roles	2.56%
N/A	61.54%
Not required for most roles	2.56%
Productivity	5.13%
Recruitment issue	2.56%
Stocktaking work	5.13%
Upskilling	10.26%
Younger people	5.13%
Answered	39
Skipped	72

Low levels of maths skills were reported by 18.75% of respondents. A sector breakdown of responses can be found here: [Sector and Maths Comparison Table .csv](#) .Among the most common effects of this on business, productivity was highlighted in 5.13% of responses, particularly in progression to management roles, and logistics and stocktaking were specific tasks mentioned in multiple responses. The full responses can be found here: [Maths Skills responses.pdf](#).

Note: The high number of respondents that skipped the above question, or replied N/A or equivalent, reflects the number of responses that reported they do not find low levels of maths skills in the workforce. The follow-up question was highlighted by one respondent as a leading question.